

JIM/BEAVER TIMBER SALE PROPOSAL
INITIAL PROPOSAL
May 7, 2008

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) has the task of managing State school trust lands. DNRC, Stillwater Unit is proposing the Jim/Beaver Timber Sale Project(s) and is the initial stages of public involvement and project development for the environmental analysis. The primary purposes of Jim/Beaver Timber Sale Project are to provide income for the school trust, regenerate new stands, and thin existing stands to improve the growth and vigor of the remaining stand through commercial and precommercial activities. The proposed project would harvest 2 to 3.5 million of board feet (MMbf) over approximately 580 acres. In addition, approximately 100 acres of sapling stands would be precommercially thinned to reduce the stocking density and improve the growth and vigor of the young stand of timber. The environmental analysis would cover these proposed activities.

The project design will follow *Montana's Administrative Rules for Forest Management* (Annotated Rules of Montana 36.11.401 through 36.11.450) and will be based on the premise that for the foreseeable future timber management will continue to be the primary source of revenue from these parcels of land. DNRC also works under the State Forest Land Management Plan (SFLMP) philosophy that timber management will be the primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives on State forestlands.

The school trust lands being considered in this proposal include portions of the following State sections (see attached maps):

- Jim Creek - Sections 25 and 36, Township 33 north, Range 26 west
- Beaver Creek - Section 36, Township 33 north, Range 26 west

The Department would also consider other opportunities that would produce long-term revenue to the State trusts. However, the proposals must show the ability to produce long-term revenue comparable to timber management. *Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)* 36.11.451 through 36.11.456 address the option of DNRC to accept applications for Timber Conservation License in Lieu of Timber Sale and implement the bidding process for the license. A written notice of intent to request this License and the \$100 fee must be delivered to the Stillwater Unit office within 60 days of the date this Initial Proposal was provided. For further information, please contact Stillwater State Forest at (406) 881-2371.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND INITIAL MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

JIM CREEK SECTIONS

The last commercial treatment, which occurred in the mid-1990s, treated approximately 470 acres and removed approximately 2.4 MMbf of timber from these sections. The last entry into the Jim Creek sections was for an extensive precommercial thinning that occurred in the early 2000s.

The proposed harvest would treat approximately 170 acres of older timber in the subalpine fir, mixed-conifer, and western larch/Douglas-fir covertypes. The proposed harvest treatments include:

- Approximately 88 percent (150 acres) of the proposed harvesting would consist of regeneration or overstory-removal treatments. These treatments would retain 4 to 12 trees per acre.
- The intermediate canopy of an old-growth stand would be treated on the remaining 12 percent (20 acres) of the area. This treatment would remove primarily western larch, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir species from the understory and retain 45 to 70 trees per acre in a clumpy distribution.

Existing roads and some newly built, temporary short spur roads would be used. All roads used for hauling would be improved to meet BMPs prior to harvesting activities.

BEAVER CREEK SECTION

Most of this section (70 percent) was logged during the late 1940s to provide lumber following World War II. The Beaver Creek section was last entered in the 1980s. Approximately 1.6 MMbf of timber over approximately 330 acres were harvested in this entry. Management activities were primarily related to the mountain pine beetle infestation of lodgepole pine.

The proposed harvest treatments would occur in the older mixed-conifer and western larch/Douglas fir covertypes. The proposed commercial treatment mix is:

- The regeneration harvest treatment (79 acres) would retain 6 to 12 trees per acre.
- The intermediate harvest treatment (89 acres) would retain 45 to 70 trees per acre in a clumpy distribution.
- The combination treatments (240 acres) would include commercial thinning, shelterwood, seedtree, and group selection harvesting, depending on the existing species mix, tree vigor, tree quality, and site-specific factors (aspect, soils, etc.). This treatment would retain between 4 and 60 trees per acre, depending on the site.
- An intermediate treatment is proposed for one old-growth stand of approximately 7 acres that would remove primarily lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir species from the understory.

In addition, approximately 100 acres of sapling stands would be precommercially thinned to reduce the stocking density and improve the young stand of timber.

Existing roads and some newly built, short, temporary spur roads would be used for harvesting. All roads used for hauling would be improved to meet BMPs prior to harvesting activities.

PROCESS

The processes of project development and environmental analysis should take approximately 9 months. In accordance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act, public concerns about the project and potential environmental impacts will be considered and analyzed prior to the implementation of harvesting activities. The project design and corresponding level of analysis will be influenced by the input of the public and specialists. Following completion of the environmental analysis and the development of the timber sale contract, the project

would be presented to the State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) for their consideration. If the Land Board approves the minimum bid for the timber sale, the timber sale would be bid out for sale on the open market. The highest bid for the timber sale would be allowed to complete the roadwork and harvest the timber. The precommercial thinning would be completed under a separate contract.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

DNRC is interested to learn of issues or concerns you may have about this project. This notice initiates a 30-day comment period to provide you an opportunity to be involved in the project. Your involvement will provide DNRC information to identify issues and carry out the first stage of the analysis process.

If you have no comments or concerns at this time, but would like to remain on the mailing list for this project, please contact Will Wood (see below). If we do not hear from you, your name will be dropped from this mailing list.

The comment period will be open until June 6, 2008. Please comment by emailing wwood@mt.gov, calling Will at (406)-881-2673, or sending written comments to Will Wood, Stillwater State Forest, P.O. Box 164, Olney Montana 59927.

PROPOSED JIM/BEAVER TIMBER SALE VICINITY MAP





